


Future Proof Planning: planning in the face of uncertainty

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What I'm going to say

- The challenge of change
- The meaning of place
- Planning for places;
- Planning as politics
- Social learning in the face of future uncertainty
- Collaborative planning as collective social learning
- Conclusion

The challenge of change

- Global warming and climate change;
- Peak oil and shortages of essential materials (water, food, and rare minerals such as cadmium, coltan, mercury, tungsten);
- Demographic change
- Technological & economic changes – e.g. energy production, agriculture

Predictions for New Zealand



- Better growing conditions
- Less frost, more very hot days;
- Tropical cyclones in north;
- Drier in north and east,
- Wetter in south and west;
- More frequent and severe drought;
- Increased risk of forest fire;
- More weather bombs– floods and erosion;
- Stronger westerly winds;
- Sea level rise; storm surges,
- Coastal erosion;

Source: Ministry for the Environment

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The opportunities – better growing conditions



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Flooding, erosion, property damage



The challenge of change

Global changes(IPCC2007)

- Warming to between 1.1°C and 6.4°C at the end of the century;
- Warming greatest over land and at most high northern latitudes;
- More heat waves and extremely hot days;
- Warmer nights;
- Melting of polar ice and tundra.

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The challenge of change

Impacts – Pacific islands in trouble

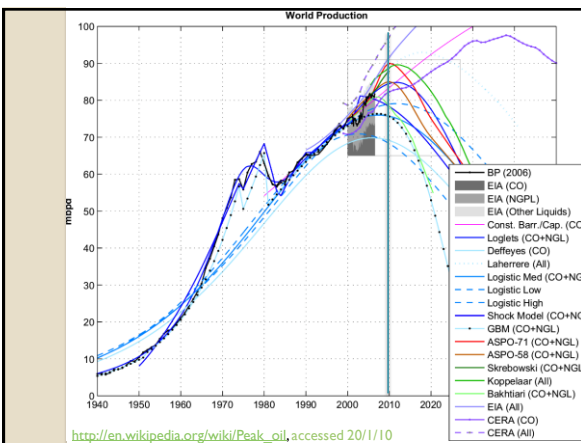
- Intense cyclones
- Rising sea levels
- Ocean acidification
- Biodiversity loss
- Spread of diseases and invasive organisms.
- Reduced food security
- Impacts on world trade

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The challenge of change

Peak oil

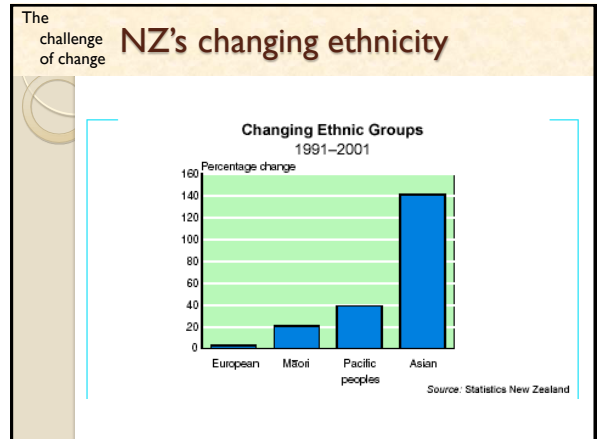
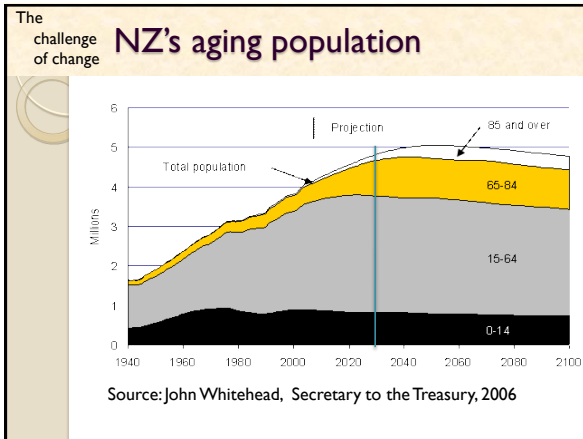
- Widely accepted oil and gas will peak;
- Disagreement about when;
- Main impacts on transport;
- Potential for major social and economic upheaval;
- Hirsch report: *without timely mitigation, the ... costs will be unprecedented. Viable mitigation options exist ... but to have substantial impact, they must be initiated more than a decade in advance of peaking. (2005)*



The challenge of change

NZ’s changing population

- NZ’s population is aging and becoming more ethnically diverse.
- Aging will mean:
 - quarter of the population over 65+ in 20 years (from 12% in 2005);
 - Fewer under 15s, proportionately and in real terms;
 - Some geographic areas will be more affected than others (e.g. B. o. Plenty, Northland, Nelson area).



The meaning of place

- Place and space are not the same.
- Space denotes a physical area;
- Place evokes a sense of familiarity.
- Cresswell (2009), 'places are, in the broadest sense, locations imbued with meaning that are sites of everyday practice'. (2009, 169),



Planning for places

- Planning creates the physical form and inter-connections of spaces – the urban 'macro-form'
- Design and use create places;
- The spaces created by planning can:
 - bring people together or force them apart;
 - make getting around in daily life easy or difficult;
 - Affirm cultural diversity or ignore it;
 - increase or decrease environmental hazards
 - Increase or reduce social inequalities (by the location and distribution of community facilities);
 - Increase or reduce safety, comfort or threat;





Planning in the light of change

- Climate change, peak everything, and demographic change are likely to mean:
 - More immigration from diverse areas
 - More cultural diversity
 - Changing service provision (more for the elderly and less for the young;
 - Changing residential demand: more housing for singles; less for families;
 - Changing commercial and consumer demands
 - Changes in transportation –
 - In the type of private vehicles (e.g. mobility scooters, electric cars);
 - In the pattern of vehicle use (public v. private transport);
 - In roading design and technology (less use of bitumen);
 - In bulk transport of goods (from road to rail).

Planning as politics

- Planning is deeply political (Forester, Flyvbjerg, McGuirk).;
- Under NZ's Resource Management Act it involves private sector developers within a public policy framework;
- The interests of developers are to maximize short-term gain,
- The interests of the wider public involve community and future generations
- Private interest usually short term; public interest usually long-term and diffuse by nature
- Planning regularly pits the economically measurable short-term interests of property owners against the diffuse, hard-to-measure gains or losses of the community at large

Planning as politics

Five Cross-Roads: an example

Planning as politics

Variation 21

Social learning
in the face of
uncertainty

Future Planning for places

- NZ planning needs to shift from an emphasis on efficiency and prevention of environmental harms to an emphasis **on collective and collaborative processes of social learning.**
- Current planning practices are built on ethical principles of private property rights, public involvement and assumptions about consequences of private development that, in the face of great future uncertainties, are antithetical to the public good.

Social learning
in the face of
uncertainty

Social learning/collaborative planning

- Social learning is a term used to highlight that we learn most from people with whom we have meaningful relationships e.g. our family, our peers, our neighbours, people we know;
- Social learning is evolutionary – it is a gradual process;
- Social learning involves openness and learning from each other (experts can learn from non-experts);
- Social learning emphasises interests that happen to coincide ('win-win');

Social learning
in the face of
uncertainty

Collective adaptation to change

- Future proof planning must involve processes of social learning
- The social learning process must be inclusive - involving experts, visionaries, developers and community representatives
- Experts can provide predictions and forecasts on the basis of technical & scientific information;
- Policies must involve the public in assessing options which are collectively acceptable, practicable and effective.

Social learning
in the face of
uncertainty

Collaborative planning as collective social learning

- Planning theorist Patsy Healey calls it 'communicative planning'.
- For Healey Planning is first and last a **communicative enterprise.**
- Planners need to become facilitators of mutual understanding about strategically important issues for the community as a whole.
- Planners must pay attention to 'the construction of arenas' of discussion and policy development.
- 'All dimensions of knowing, understanding, appreciating, experiencing, and judging may be brought into play'. In NZ this would mean not just scientific knowledge but local knowledge and Maori tikanga.

Conclusion

- There are two pressures on NZ planning:
 - A pressure for efficiency and simplification;
 - A pressure for democratic decision-making.
- Democratic decision-making involves messiness, complexity and delay.
- Efficiency involves expertise and a risk of community estrangement from place-making;
- BUT, in a future of uncertainty, the professionals are no longer expert.
- Public involvement and social learning will minimise conflict between public and private interests in the face of an uncertain future.



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